

Thoughts about Parenting Time  
For  
Young Kids!

At the request of Larry Heron, I am offering these observations about the impact of multiple visits and overnights for young children, between divorced parents.

It has been my experience and verified by psychological research that children are very resilient and flexible in adapting to the circumstances of parenting times between the respective homes of divorced parents; if the parents are able to control and reduce the parental conflict.

While many in the courts believe in a developmental theory that consistency is the foundation for stability in children, they apply the theory across many dimensions some of which are inappropriate. For example, having a consistent bed time is developmentally beneficial, however, having a consistent bed, only at one house, is not.

Children thrive on diversity of experience; it allows them to develop richer and broader insight and understanding of the world. Multiple care takers further expand the child's ability to interpret the world in an appropriate way.

The reality is that in Attachment theory frequency is the basis for consistency. As such, it becomes most important that children, even infants should have consistent contact with the other parent. This contact has been shown to be beneficial to the development of the child's emotional, psychological, and gendered self. The regularity of contact, the amount of time, as well as the quality of time, are all important.

If consistent and regular contacts, including overnight experiences are not allowed to occur, we know that the child will begin to exhibit failure to attach, not just with the absent parent, but within other realms of living, i.e. social relationships. The infant and toddler can endure the car ride, the different room, different parenting styles, different foods, different beds, and flourish if the attachment is created and maintained without the parental conflict impacting the child.

The courts so often reflect an old theory that Mother's are best, and they may be at some behaviors, but babies and children need both parents and parenting styles. Without both, the child is not given a whole world within which to develop.

In Summary, child contact between divorced parents that is regular and consistent, including overnights will develop a healthy and wholesome child, anything less will damage the child's ability to cope and relate to his or her world successfully.

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